

critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus



Aug 22, 1956 Vol VIII No 24 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter \$25 year \$6.50 quarter

This Week

Nobody's Child-
Open Stage-15-2nd
Ave 8/22. Richard
Cooke staged play
with Ronald Maccone,
Ernest Macsia, Bob
Berger

Understudy OK

Lola Fisher who
subbed for Julie An-
drews, My Fair Lady,
for several perform-
ances (see story on
Page 2), was okayed
by O'connor, Journal
American. Underst-
udy gave interpretation
identical to Andrews,
a tribute to both act-
resses. Her perform-
ance, drama editor
rated, ranged from
gay and lively to ten-
der and sad, as script
directed.

London Coverage

News and reviews
from London theatre
scene will be regular-
ly covered in "C. D.
starting with this
issue. See page 6.

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

No Exit-Theatre East-211 E 60 8/14. Four pro votes
recorded for Jean Paul Sartre's play revived by Pat New-
hall and Hans Weigert at the small arena theatre. Atkin-
son, Times, headed unanimous consent labeling play a first
rate script for the avant-garde theatre. Robert Mandan, Helen
Seamon and Tani Seitz, the 3 member cast, were all excell-
ent, and the direction terse, added Times reviewer. Beckley,
Herald Tribune, okayed production, but felt that a more di-
rect and stronger play could make group one of the more wid-
ely appealing Off Broadway ensembles. Watts, Post, feels
that tiny arena stage adds considerably and effectively to
the play's atmospheric quality. Play is interestingly acted,
Post critic agreed. Sartre's fatalistic philosophy is made
clear and exciting, comments Frank, Women's Wear.

Digests of Current Comments on Summer Shows

The Spa, a new version of Molnar's Olympia by Edward
Chodorov presented at Hyde Park, NY, starring Gloria Van-
derbilt, was panned by Hobe, Variety, as hopeless, a waste of
time, money and effort. 28 year old comedy is pointless and
silly.

Hits Revisited

No Time for Sergeants with Charles Holman in the role
originated by Andy Griffiths, seems even better than at open-
ing, cheers Hobe, Variety. Cornpone accent of Griffiths is
missing, but Holman is thoroughly satisfactory. Play now
seems more compact and better balanced than originally
Damn Yankee was lauded by Johnson, Post music critic,
as a hilarious, raucous musical. Will Success Spoil Rock
Hunter script has been edited to cut down in scenery and
actors, reports Jess, Variety. Jayne Mansfield is still mak-
ing the proper sounds and motions. The reaction of the
males in the audience is unmistakable, he reports.

My Fair Lady stars had an epidemic of sore throats last week. Julie Andrews was out several days at the start of the week due to a throat ailment and her understudy Lola Fisher subbed. Later in the week after Rex Harrison had been given a week off to recover from an equally sore throat his stand-by Tom Helmore developed a sore throat also. In the midst of the Saturday (Aug 18) evening performance the show had to be stopped due to Helmore's loss of voice. Ticket holders for that performance either got a refund or exchanged their stubs for a far, future date. Harrison will return at end of week after rest in Bermuda.

Plays

Middle of the Night resumes Aug 27... Most Happy Fella has New Year Eve tickets on sale... Double in Hearts slated for Oct 16 debut at Golden... Waltz of Toreadors, Jean Anouilh new comedy, due to open Jan 17... Quare Fellow due for NY debut in Jan at a Shubert theatre... Cocteau's The Infernal Machine planned for 1957-58 NY production by Michael Myerberg... Theatre Guild planning Shaw's In Good King Charles Days for 1957 production

Players

Martha Raye to star in new revue Boffola to be presented in Jan by Rigby-Jacoby... Faye Emerson to star in Protective Custody... Max Adrian and Barbara Cook signed for Candide... Will Kuluva added to Very Special Baby cast... Berthold Brecht, 58, died of heart attack in East Germany.

Summer Playhouses

An Affair of Murder by Mignon Eberhart will debut at Mt Kisco, NY Aug 28... A House in the Country by Sheridan Gibney, will be tried out at Mounta'nhome, Pa Aug 28... Fallen Angels, with its Broadway cast intact, will play at New Hope, Pa. Sept 10... Career a new play by James Lee will be presented for 4 weeks at Houston Alley Theatre, Texas starting Aug 28.

Vaudeville

Lee Davis, Alphonse Berge, Three Arnauts, Bobby Brandt and Great Barton head new Palace show.

Theatre TV Notes

Shirley Booth may appear on CBS TV "Playhouse 90" in an adaption of George Kelly's The Torch Bearers this season.

Theatre Book Notes

Macmillan has published a 2 volume boxed edition of the 6 Sean O Casey autobiographical volumes at \$20 per set... Nils T. Granlund autobiography to be published by McKay "Blondes, Brunettes and Bullets"

Theatre Film Notes

"Klop", the Soviet satire, will be filmed by Robert Dowling after it has been presented on Broadway under the direction of Peter Brooke. It is now being translated... John Raitt will repeat his role in Pajama Game film, Doris Day to co-star in Warner film.

Other Broadways

Studabaker Theatre Company, Chicago, will present 40 week season by resident company starting Oct 2 with Androcles and The Lion with Ernest Truex starred.



OFF
BROADWAY

Shakespearewrights will open season at new headquarters, the basement of St. Ignatius Church, 264 W 87, Oct 17 with Hamlet...Shakespeare Theatre Workshop has received a gift of \$750 from Herman Levin to keep Taming of Shrew playing Thursdays and Fridays through Sept 1 at 2000 seat outdoor East River Amphitheatre.

The Golden Fleece by Reuben Nadler will be tried out at Contemporary Theatre 15-2nd Ave Aug 23. David Balcam director...Tempo Playhouse next production to be twin-bill of Ionesco's The Lesson and Ghelderode's Escorial. ...Labor Temple Theatre leased to F. Bimko who will present Yiddish plays in association with Hebrew Actors Union. First play in October to be Bimko's Broken Lives... World Is My Oyster retracted closing notice and plans to continue indefinitely.

No Exit has tickets on sale through Oct 23. Group considering revival of Ethan Frome... Three Penny Opera has upped week-end price top to \$4.85 from \$4.15 starting Sept 18... Phil Bruns will present Pantomania Sept 10 and 11 at Open Stage... Peter Falk joined Iceman Cometh... Jerry Orbach moved up to Streetsinger role in Three Penny Opera, had been Jailr. Edna Thomas joined Take a Giant step.

Picture of Dorian Gray at Bleecker St Theatre-145 Bleecker praised by Calta, Times for some noteworthy performances in a straightforward production. Script, like all dramatic attempt's at famed story, fails dismally. Play almost gets lost in excess of language.

THEATRE
TV
COMMENT



"Long Before Shakespeare" series on CBS TV with Dr. Lionel Casson of NYU was panned as too dull for TV in its present form by Gould Times, and Jose, Variety. Casson should dispense with cue cards in future shows, recommends Times editor. While trade paper mugg thought show was more for radio and tv.

THEATRE
RECORD
COMMENTS

New Faces of 1956 (Victor) results as a varied and peppy show with lively comedy and engaging songs, recommends Kupferberg, Herald Tribune. Wilson, Times, also ekayed the disc version as an entertaining work.

Most Happy Fella 3 disc album (Columbia) didn't impress Times reviewer. Music holds to a relatively pedestrian level except in the 2 pop tunes. While words, reviewer noted, often fall into that form of "stylized ordinary American."

FOR STAGE STRUCK ONLY



- * Keep fully informed of NYC theatre scene the easy way.
- * Weekly newsletter digests all theatre news, comments, reviews, published in NYC press. Plus complete business, ticket data.
- * \$25 year, \$6.50 quarter

CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, EL 5-6894



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

LATOUCHE OBITS... John Latouche possessed one of the freshest and most imaginative minds in the American theatre, states Watts, Post. If only for his Ballet Ballads and The Golden Apple he would deserve to be remembered with honor... Recent death of author should have evoked more than casual and fleeting sorrow among those who didn't even know him, adds Chapman, News, for he was a gifted man in the theatre and a conscientious one. The Ballad of Baby Doe, which Michael Myerberg will present on Broadway this season, is not a monumental work, but it is a good final one.

COLUMN TIPS... Samuel Beckett's new play has all the actors buried up to their necks in sand, reports Knickerbocker... Shubert alley can start guessing the real-life models in Mary Orr's novel about the theatre entitled "Diamond in the Sky", notes Kilgallen.

FALL HITS... \$800,000 of tickets pledged for Happy Hunting musical with Ethel Merman, \$600,000 for Bells Are Ringing, and \$500,000 for Candide musical adds up Beckley, Herald Tribune. Theatre parties make up bulk of this advance pledges. Merman show has already sold out 70 evening dates though it does not open to December 6. Sponsors guarantee the house and producers can't be blamed in these days of mounting costs for leaning heavily on such box-office insurance, reporter concludes.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Chief inadequacy of the London stage lies in the quality of the printed theatre programs which do not give enough information about the players, complains Watts, Post... Chapman, News, would not be surprised if next season's most important drama is sordid and decadent. What we need most is a dramatist who can write from the heart and the mind, and not from a psychoanalyst's couch.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Omission of South Pacific from list of "Ten Musicals Most Worth Preserving" selected by Lieberman, Columbia Records, in Times Magazine panned by 2 readers... Drama news columns often give more space to closing of Off Broadway shows than they do to their openings, notes a "C. D." subscriber.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Jule Styne, producer-composer, gave up a promising career as a concert pianist to enter theatre work, Coleman, Mirror, recounts. He had appeared as piano soloist with the Chicago Symphony and other great orchestras, but between august assignments he started composing popular songs. Some of them caught the ears of Hollywood talent scouts. He did scores for more than 30 films prior to his Broadway shows--High Button Shoes, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and Two on the Aisle... Lola Fisher, who subbed for Julie Andrews, My Fair Lady, prepared herself for her big break by being a soloist with Sammy Kaye's orchestra, a role at Jones Beach Night in Venice, by TV work and by appearing in the chorus of 2 Broadway shows, Borchert, Journal American learned.



" PROS & CONS BY T.M.K"

No Exit, Sartre's short play of 3 unbeautiful people in a sub-chamber of Hell, is given a straight-forward, intelligent, professional production at Theatre East. The director has put the play in its simplest language and presented it directly to the audience in the tiny arena theatre. Presented minus an intermission, the French play is only 90 minutes long. Certainly a curtain raiser should be added to give patrons a full evening of theatre.

* * *

The show didn't go on. The legend that it must was dealt a blow when My Fair Lady was halted in mid-performance due to the loss of voice by stand-by Tom Helmore filling in for the ill Rex Harrison. Certainly it was wiser for all concerned to save the stand-by's vocal chords for future performances than to risk an injury.

* * *

Though none of the foundations are yet ready to subsidize theatre production as such, perhaps some of them could subsidize theatre audiences. Fulbright students abroad are paid expenses to study and attend foreign plays. Perhaps this same plan for out-of-town students to study and attend NYC plays could be developed.

* * *

Off Broadway theatres which have tried 7 PM and 10 PM curtain-times on Saturday nights report good results. It has been several seasons since Broadway theatre managers tried a half-hearted experiment for one-day per week early curtains.

The attempt at the 7 PM "Commuter" curtain time was never given a fair chance. It was never fully explained, advertised or publicized.

After a few dismal evenings the managers decided that the 8 40 PM curtain was their best bet.

The experience this summer of the Off-Broadway houses should certainly lead to a renewed attempt for an early curtain time at least once during the week at Broadway houses.

Anyone who has wandered through the theatre district at 8 PM knows that many theatre goers are ready and able to see shows earlier than 8 40 PM. Most houses have crowds outside them before 8 PM. Many theatre goers become peeved when the advertised 8 40 PM curtain does not actually go up to 8 50 PM or 9 PM.

The ticket-buyers who want and would back early curtain times are available if theatre managers would expend the effort to cooperate with them.

* * *

London Theatre



Plays

Mr. Bolfry, a revival of James Bridie's 1943 play, will open at Aldwych Aug 29 with Alastair Sim... Elmer Rice's Dream Girl will be presented at Liverpool Repertory Company, Rice to aid in final rehearsals... Shaw's The Doctor's Dilemma to be presented Sept 29 at Sayville

Players

Nude with Violin, Noel Coward's new comedy, to feature Kathleen Harrison. Opens 2 week season at Olympia, Dublin, Sept 29 prior to pre-London tour. John Gielgud heads cast and will also direct.

Club Theatres

Soviet farce Hold the Line opens Aug 17 at Unity... Lillian Hellman's The Children's Hour will be presented Sept 17 at Arts... 3 banned plays -- Cat on Hot Tin Roof Tea and Sympathy and View From the Bridge may be presented in repertory at Lyric, Hammersmith.

Comments

The curtain raiser is coming back into fashion in London, notes Stage: Grumbles and protests are frequently heard when theatre-goers leave a comparatively short play, trade journal reports. Curtain raisers are being used to make certain their patrons go away feeling they have had sufficient entertainment for their money.

Digests of London Reviews

The Quare Fellow, Brendan Behan's new play at Comedy, makes up in enchanting, irrespressible, outrageous flow of Gallic humor that it lacks in style and purpose, sums up Shulman, Standard. Critic fears that author's detailing of a hanging is so ghoulish that many will be revolted by play. Though most of the dialogue is comic, it makes a harrowing evening--there is no tragedy and no tragic relief, adds "Stage." Alternately grisly and lyrical, full of humor and anguish that are often inseparable, reports Hurren, Whats On.

Don't Destroy Me, a first play by 18 year old Michael Hastings presented at New Lindsay, shows considerable good promise of good things to come from the young author, comments RM, Stage. Play about family life in a British rooming house is for the most part sincere, true and moving. But Hurren, Whats On, found it too depressing. He enjoyed curtain raiser, Wolf Mankowitz's The Mighty Hunter, better.

SUMMER

THEATRE

TRYOUTS



Love Is a Two Way Street-a new play by A. E. Eckland, tried out at Sharon, Conn. Aug 21.

Smile of the Moon Man- a new play by Lawrence Slade at Litchfield, Conn, Aug 21

" OFF BROADWAY "

AQUASHOW C1 5-6641
 Flushing
 ICEMAN COMETH 5 Sher Sq
 Circle \$3.60 OR 5-9437
 MAN DESTINY 85 E 4
 Downtown \$3.60 CR 3-4412
 NO EXIT 211 E 60
 T. Est \$3.30 TE 2-9220
 PIC DOR GRAY 145 Bleecker
 Bleecker St. WA 9-8750
 SHOW BOAT
 Jones Beach
 TAMING SHREW
 East River Theatre
 3 PENNY OPERA 121 Chrla.
 De Lys \$3.60 WA 4-8782
 UNCLE VANYA 83 E 4
 4th St CR 4-5710
 WORLD OYST 100-7th Av S
 Actors \$3.60 CR 5-1036
 5 Can- Trib. Post, Times, Women Wear, Var.

"C. D. VIEWS OF CURRENT SHOWS "

Pros: Damn Yankee, Diary Anne Frank, Inherit Wind,
 No Exit, Ieman Cometh, Uncle Vanya
 Cons: Middle Night, Fanny
 World Is My Oyster

" TV THEATRE SHOWS "

8/30. NBC- Wayward Saint- Lilm Redmond on Lux Theatre
 9/11- ANC- Antigone with Claude Rains, Marisa Frenn on Kaiter Hour
 10/6- CBS- Cold Porter Festival with Shirley Jones, Gordon MacCrae Ford Festival
 10/24- Barn Yesterday- NBC- with Mary Martin on Evans Show
 11/25- NBC- Man and Superman with Maurice Evans on Evans Show.

" THEATRE CALENDER "

No body's Child-Open Stage 8/22
 Golden Fleecce-Contemporary 8/23
 Saint Joan- Phoenix 9/4
 Rensselaers-Vienna-Barb Pl 9/4
 Arms & Man- Downtown 9/7
 Pictures Exhibition-Playh-9/16
 Lower Daphne-Contemporary 9/16
 Judy Garland Show-Palace 9/20
 Take Care Step-Jan Hus 9/25
 Absalom-Fischer Hall 9/27
 Lord Red Patrick-Ambas 10/3
 Harbor Lights-Playhouses 10/4
 6 Fingers 5 Fine-Longfere 10/5
 Mr. Candido-G. Mene 10/8
 Sea Gull- 4th St- 10/9
 Featured Fama-Golden 10/10
 Reluctant Debutante-Miller 10/10
 Daisy Miller-Equity 10/10
 Too Late Phalarope-Belasco 10/11
 Happy Ant Hill- Fischer Hall 10/7
 Double in Hearts n 10/16
 Hamlet-Zhukopereverlights 10/17
 Apple Cart-Plymouth 10/18
 Lili Abner-21 James 10/22
 Old Vic-W. Garden 10/23
 Separate Tables-Music Box 10/25
 Child of Fortune-R yale 11/12
 Very Special Baby- Belasco 11/4
 Ciria of Summer-longacre 11/9
 Candide-Beck 11/22
 Belle are Kinging-Shubert 11/29
 Happy Hunting- Majestic 12/6
 Hole in Head-Korcosco 12/12
 Vails to Small Planet-Booth 1/9/57
 Waits of Toreadors- 1/17/57
 Quare Fellow- 1/7/57
 Beat of Steinbeck-Playhouse 2/1/57
 13 Daughters-W. Garden 2/18/57
 First Gentleman-4/7/57

"SUMMER PACKAGE RATINGS "

BEASOPS FABLES(Lillie)
 1 Pro- Post(Andover)
 1 Con- Variety (Andover)
 CHALK GARDEN (Glab)
 2 Pro- Variety & Wor -Tel_-Sun(Westport)
 1 Pro- Post- East Hampton
 2 Con- WI & S & Variety (East Hampton
 3 Pro for Bankhead but against material
 Post, WI & S, Var laiy (Westport)
 1 Pro- Variety - Hindsdale, Ill)
 WHATS THE RUSH (Lewis)

 Aug 22, 1956 PLAYGOERS GUIDE chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, NYC EL 5-6894

This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, the weekly NYC theatre newsletter, presents up-to-minute data on current business and critical reception of all current Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Subscribers to CRITICAL DIGEST may write or phone for any other specific data or late reviews.

"C". Critics-figures refer to percentage of PRO votes filed by NYC daily drama critics. PRO means show was recommended for an entertaining and/or stimulating evening, not if critic thought it would be a hit.

"B". Business-figures refer to percentage of seats sold last week and in preceding weeks. %Pro-centage figures refer to last week's business. "CAP" figures refer to Variety's estimates of gross for last week and previous week. All figures listed in thousands. Thus, "Cap \$27--\$24,000" means Capacity of house is \$27, business last week was \$24,000, the previous week \$21,000, etc.

 CAT HOT TIN ROOF 217 W 45 60% C- Chapman, News, file sole con vote
 Morosco \$6.90 55% B- Cap \$31--\$20 \$19 \$19 \$21 \$21 \$23 \$20
 DAMN YANKEE 226 W 46 100% C- Unanimous raves for musical
 46th St \$8.05 CI 6-4271 95% B- Cap \$50--\$47 \$42 \$43 \$48 \$47 \$50
 DIARY A. FRANK 138 W 48 100% C- Unanimous raves for Pulitzer winner
 Cort \$5.75 CI 5-4289 90% B- Cap \$28--\$20 \$21 \$22 \$28 \$24 \$28
 FANNY 245 W 44 50% C- Con votes by Trib, Mir, Post, J. Am
 Majestic \$7.50 CI 6-0730 45% B- Cap \$62--\$26 \$27 \$28 \$28 \$24 \$19
 HATFUL RAIN 149 W 45 70% C- 3 con votes-Mirror, Post, J. American
 Lyceum \$5.75 L10 2-3897 35% B- Cap \$23--\$9 \$8 \$10 \$10 \$14 \$14
 INHERIT WIND 208 W 41 90% C- Funke, sole con votes- Times
 National \$5.75 PE 6-8226 RE OPENS- Sept 14
 MATCHMAKER 250 W 45 90% C- Watts, Post, sole con vote
 Royale \$5.75 CI 5-5760 40% B- Cap \$31--\$12 \$12 \$14 \$13 \$13 \$17
 MIDDLE NIGHT 250 W 52 20% C-2 pro play-Mir, J. Am- 100% for Robinson
 ANYA \$5.75 CI 6-8870 RE OPENS --Aug 27
 MR WONDERFUL 1681 Bway 10% C- Chapman, News, sole pro- 100% for Davis
 Broadway \$7.50 CI 7-2887 70% B- Cap \$71--\$45--\$41 \$42 \$44 \$46 \$41 \$48
 MOST HAPPY FELLA 246 W 45 100% Unanimous raves for musical & cast
 Imperial \$7.50 CO 5-2412 100% B- Cap \$58--\$56 \$58 \$58 \$58 \$58 \$58

MY FAIR LADY 1655 Bway 100% C- Raves for musical of CBS classic
 Hellinger \$7.50 PL 7-7064 100% B- Cap \$64--\$64 \$64 \$64 \$64 \$64 \$64
 NO TIME SOTS 250 W 52 100% C- Unanimous raves for soldier come
 Alvin \$5.75 CI 5-5226 100% B- Cap \$38--\$38 \$38 \$38 \$38 \$38 \$38
 NEW FACES 247 W 47 60% C- 3 Pros- News, Mirror, J. Am
 Barrymore \$7.50 CI 6-0390 60% B- Cap \$38--\$22 \$22 \$23 \$27 \$30 \$36 \$22
 PAJAMA GAME 240 W 44 100% Unanimous raves for musical
 St James \$6.90 LA 4-4664 50% B- Cap \$42--\$27 \$27 \$27 \$30 \$29 \$32 \$38
 WILL SUCCESS 245 SW 44 20% C- 2 Pros- J. Am, News.
 Shubert \$5.75 CI 6-5090 35% B- Cap \$41 \$14 \$12 \$14 \$15

"RATINGS OF NYC CRITICS"

1955-56 season ratings of NYC drama critics on CURRENT Broadway shows by Critical Digest. "%C" Figures are percentage of pro votes in comparison to number of current shows reviewed. Variety figures of 1955-56 and 1954-55 seasons are percentage figures of favorable reviews written for entire season.

	"C. D. %"	Pros	Cons	Variety '55-'56	'54-'55
Altkinson, Times	60%	10	6	.490	.607
Kerr, Herald Tribune	55%	9	7	.394	.354
Chapman, News	80%	13	3	.527	.580
Coleman, Mirror	65%	11	5	.454	.566
Watts, Post	50%	8	8	.541	.426
Hawkins, W-Tel-Sun	65%	11	5	.396	.548
McClain, J. Amer	80%	12	4	.535	.532

"LONDON OPENINGS"

Aug 14- Measure for Measure- Stratford on Avon
 Aug 15- The Young and Beautiful- Arts
 Aug 23- No Time for Sergeants-Her Majesta
 Aug 27- Mother Courage- Palace --Brecht Company-
 Sept 3- Recruiting Officer- Bristol Old Vic
 Sept 4- Miraculous Mandarin-Covent Garden
 Sept 4- Towards Zero- St James
 Sept 5- Timon of Athens- Old Vic
 Sept 5- Head Over Heels- Phoenix

